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ABSTRACT

Basic considerations for evaluating a faculty development program are considered. The framework consists of: establishing the perimeters, designating the purpose, assessing the developmental stage of the program, determining general methods of evaluation, and defining the criteria for success. Faculty development may include efforts to assist faculty members to develop their talents and teaching skills. Instructional development consists of designing new courses, redesigning current courses, and using updated instruction. Additionally, organizational development focuses on reorganizing the institution itself to create a better environment for teaching. Evaluation is nearly always connected to some decision-making process, including formative and summative evaluations. Determining the purpose of the program evaluation requires a considerable degree of knowledge of the programs and objectives, as well as the political and economic factors, affecting any particular program. Before deciding the method of evaluation to be used, those involved should take a close look at the stage of the development program to be evaluated. Methods of program evaluation include: the historical-descriptive approach, the measurement-correlational model, quasi-experimental designs, the developmental-intensive model, the action-research approach, illuminative evaluation, and the consultative approach. Criteria for success may include positive reactions of participants, increased knowledge, and improvements implemented within the institution or classroom. (SW)

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PROGRAM EVALUATION

STAFF / FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK

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PROGRAM EVALUATION

Faculty Development

PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK

Nearly every book concerned with staff/faculty development programs contains a chapter, albeit usually a very short chapter, entitled "Program Evaluation." Almost without exception, the chapter begins on an apologetic note stating that as yet there has been little substantive or rigorous research conducted in program evaluation (Gaff, 1975; Centra, 1976; Hammons, et al., 1978; O'Banion, 1978). It appears ironic that a topic such as staff/faculty development, which frequently and pointedly deals with faculty evaluation, should have failed so miserably in examining its own pretensions. Paul Dressel, writing in 1961, stated that "failure to engage systematically in evaluation in reaching the many decisions necessary in education means that decision by prejudice, by tradition, or by rationalization is paramount" (Gaff, p. 161). And yet, in evaluating development programs of various kinds, it appears that decisions are still being made by default, by prejudice, by tradition, and by rationalization. There may be, in fact, good reasons why infant programs completely immersed in gaining faculty support, securing financial backing, and simply doing something conspicuous would have little time or inclination for introspective evaluation. And yet, this view seems to be an extremely

short-sighted one. Disregard for, or inattention to, program evaluation may at best be myopic and at worst catastrophic to the well-being of a fledgling faculty development program in a climate of scarce resources and fierce competition.

In attempting to provide a viable framework from which to evaluate a faculty development program, there are five basic considerations which must be carefully and thoughtfully entertained. (1) Establish the perimeters. Define exactly what it is that is being evaluated. There is considerable confusion among such terms as faculty, staff, program, organizational, administrative, instructional. and personal development, all of which are frequently discussed as if they were a single entity under the rubric of faculty development. (2) Designate the purpose. Know whether the evaluation is for purposes of improvement and change or for purposes of continuation, funding, or expansion. (3) Assess the developmental stage of the program. Know whether it is in the planning stages, relatively new, or mature. (4) Determine general methods of evaluation. The choice to use "hard" or "soft" data and the ways of collecting and analyzing information should be decided upon in relation to the type of program, the purpose of the evaluation, and the stage of development of the program. The method should be determined by the need; an inappropriate method should not be used regardless of its convenience or quantifiability. (5) Define the criteria for success. Establish clearly what specific data will confirm or deny the success of a program. Each of these considerations must be accounted for in providing the framework

for a meaningful evaluation of any development program.

Establishing Perimeters

The term "faculty development" is fraught with vagueness and ambiguity when regarded in general rather than specific terms. There are many different kinds of development programs that could, and probably should, be evaluated. At least six distinctly different types of programs come under the loosely defined generic term, faculty development. (1) Staff development is aimed at classified and paraprofessional staff, including clerical, maintenance, and service personnel. (2) Administrative development is designed to fill the often ill-defined needs of administrators at various levels. (3) Organizational development comprises those programs which propose to alter the institutional climate in some positive way. (4) Instructional development deals largely with methodologies and techniques, the "bag of tricks" approach, of which most faculty members are skeptical. (5) Personal development includes activities often removed from professional concerns but designed to enrich the personal lives of participants, through sharing of interests in crafts, hobbies, travel, avocations, and leisure time activities. (6) Faculty development consists of those activities such as released time, sabbaticals, tuition credits and professional travel support which are designed to help faculty develop themselves professionally.

Gaff (1975) condenses these six types of development programs into three. The first of these, faculty development, is the

approach that helps faculty members develop their talents and teaching skills. Instructional development, the second approach, consists of designing new courses, redesigning current courses, and using updated instructional materials. The third approach, organizational development, focuses on reorganizing the institution itself to create a better environment for teaching.

Each of these areas, whether defined narrowly or broadly, requires specific evaluation models depending upon the purposes to be fulfilled through evaluation. Once the evaluator is clear concerning the type of program or the segment of the total development program to be evaluated, the next step is the determining of the purpose.

Determining the Purpose

After defining specifically the type of development program to be evaluated, the specific purpose for the evaluation must be determined. Evaluating is nearly always connected to some decision making process. It involves a comparison, a correspondence measurement between stated goals or objectives and the actual achievement. To use Scriven's terminology, evaluation may be either formative or summative. Formative evaluation is most useful in giving direction for change. It is used for improvement of the program. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is generally used to make administrative decisions, for example funding, expansion, or retention of the program. Formative or summative evaluations could be applied to a wide variety of different purposes. The important thing is that all concerned

be absolutely sure of the nature and purpose of the evaluation. Evaluation, formative or summative, may be used for the following purposes:

(1) To assess achievement of the program objectives

(2) To assess effectiveness of the staff/faculty development facilitator or director

(3) To justify expense

(4) To improve content/structure of development activities

(5) To decide if other staff members could or should participate

(6) To identify who benefitted most and/or least (Brown, 1981).

Anderson and Ball (1978) have identified six major purposes in program evaluation a little differently. They see the purposes as follows:

(1) To contribute to decisions about program installation

(2) To contribute to decisions about program continuation, expansion, or certification

(3) To contribute to decisions about program modification

(4) To obtain evidence to rally support for a program

(5) To obtain evidence to rally opposition to a program

(6) To contribute to the understanding of basic psychological, social, and other processes (pp. 3-4).

Determining the purpose of the program evaluation requires a considerable degree of knowledge of the programs and objectives, as well as the political and economic factors, affecting any particular program. The purpose of the evaluation, either

formative or summative, must be kept in the foreground as the evaluator prepares to assess the stage of development of the program.

Assessing the Stage of Development

Before deciding the method of evaluation to be used, those involved should take a close look at the stage of the development program to be evaluated. Certainly different types of evaluation would be appropriate for a program in its first year than would be timely for a program in its tenth year. Programs generally fall into four categories. The first of these categories is the introspective stage. At this point certain key administrators, and perhaps faculty members as well, have been considering the possibilities of a faculty development program to meet some of the recurring needs of the institution and its members. This is the stage where a preliminary needs assessment should be done, along with considerable personal contacts to see if there is support, both financial and moral, for a development program. The second of these stages might be considered the planning stage. The need for a specific type of program has been recognized and the planning has begun. The third stage is the new program. This program typically is less than four years old and is still struggling for broad acceptance and greater support and utilization. The fourth stage is the mature program. This program has been in existence five years or more. It is well established and supported both administratively and financially. Its major concerns are with expanding and meeting new needs as they are

identified. Obviously, the only type of meaningful evaluation of the first three stages would be formative evaluation. What are the needs to be met? How can the planning be improved? What kind of evaluation will be used? How can the quality of existing activities be improved? The fourth stage, while perhaps benefitting from formative evaluation, may have reached a level where it should undergo global, summative evaluation which would determine if the program is indeed worthwhile. Should it be expanded or reduced? Is there a positive return on the funds invested in the program?

It should be apparent that in all these stages, an evaluation plan should be an integral part of the program and not some artificiality imposed of necessity after the fact. It is much easier to match objectives and results if there is a clear purpose in terms of expected outcomes while the program is still in its developing stage. The kind of program being evaluated, the purpose of the program, and the developmental stage of the program all need to be considered when determining the methods to be used in evaluation.

Selecting General Methods for Evaluation

Ranging from what could be identified as "hard" to "soft" data, Anderson and Ball (1978) have identified eight general methods of program evaluation. These eight methods are distributed along a continuum from the analytic to the enumerative to the clinical. The experimental and the quasi experimental studies are analytic in nature. Correlation methods fall somewhere

between the analytic and the enumerative, while surveys and personnel or client assessments are generally enumerative. Systematic "expert" judgments, clinical or case studies, and informal observations or testimony are at the clinical end of the continuum (p. 65). The choice of the appropriate method is absolutely critical to the production of a meaningful evaluation.

Bergquist and Phillips (1977) have distinguished seven evaluation models which incorporate methods and may be used in evaluating faculty development programs at various stages of development. (1) The historical-descriptive approach focuses on the systematic and objective reconstruction of the history of the program. (2) The measurement-correlational model emphasizes the collecting of quantitative information which illuminates the extent to which variations in one part of the program correspond with variations in other parts. (3) Quasi-experimental designs give both flexibility and a controlled experimental setting. Time measurements and control groups are common characteristics of this approach. (4) The developmental-intensive model provides information about the way in which one person or organization relates to the entire program. (5) The action-research approach emphasizes the clarification of program goals; it is sometimes seen more as a general model for personal and organizational change, rather than an evaluative model. (6) Illuminative evaluation is a new facet to program evaluation. It is a type of formative evaluation which can be extremely useful; however, it often neglects the special problems of the individual case

by not reflecting the great variety of concerns of those involved. (7) The consultative approach emphasizes the role of the evaluator as a source of information, activities, and skills--as a resource person (pp. 294-299).

Again, it should be emphasized that the success of an evaluation process depends entirely upon the thought and planning that goes into the design of an appropriate evaluation model. Appropriate evaluation methods can be selected if the evaluator is aware of the specific type of program being evaluated, the purpose of the evaluation, and the stage of development of the program.

Defining Criteria for Success

Assuming that the evaluator has identified the specific type of program to be examined, the purpose of the evaluation, the stage at which the program is presently situated, and the appropriate methods of evaluation, what criteria then determine the success of any particular program?

There are as many answers to that question as there are scholars writing about development programs. Kirkpatrick's writings (1960), though geared toward business and industry and predating most serious faculty development programs, are often quoted by contemporary faculty development writers. He maintains that there are four basic steps or functions to evaluation which can be used to determine the success of a program.

(1) Reaction. Reaction is simply a measure of how well persons involved liked a certain program. Sometimes

referred to as the "smiles test," reaction measures attempt to gauge the feelings of participants.

(2) Learning. Just because participants react favorably to a program does not necessarily mean that any learning has taken place. Pre- and post-tests and the use of a control group are often associated with this approach. Learning should be measured so that quantitative results can be determined, if at all possible.

(3) Behavior. Although learning may have taken place, it is of little import unless it is translated into behavior. Systematic appraisals should be made of the participant in on-the-job situations by superiors (administrators), by peers, and by subordinates (students). There should be some time lapse between the program itself and the behavioral evaluation.

(4) Results. Results are very difficult to substantiate. Where the objectives are specific as in various forms of skills training, it may be relatively easy to document how closely the program comes to satisfying given objectives. However, there are so many other variables which enter into the results that effects can only be said to be attributed to, rather than caused by, any particular training or development program.

O'Banion's (1978) three levels of evaluation consider some of the same points as Kirkpatrick. His first level includes such simple counting devices as participation and attendance,

which are extremely easy to obtain. Direct feedback from participants via questionnaires regarding the importance and value of the activity are helpful. The second level of evaluation attempts to discern changes in staff members as a result of the program. Success of this level depends largely on a positive and open climate in the institution. The third level of evaluation is more sophisticated and thus much more difficult to measure and quantify than the other two approaches. This level supposes the ultimate criterion of success to be the learning of the student. Thus, staff development should lead to program improvement and to organizational improvement which should influence in a positive way student learning. These changes would constitute a successful development program. O'Banion readily admits that staff development evaluation techniques are not sufficiently sophisticated and specific to relate precisely to improvement in organizational and program development and thus to student development. There are far too many variables that, in the present state of the art, defy control.

Lindquist (1978) sees success criteria in terms of small scale and large scale approaches. The small scale approach he equates with patronage measures including the number of persons attending workshops, individual consultations, growth contracts, and self-reporting. Large scale approaches, on the other hand, involve significant changes in the institution. Changes in the environment of an institution can indicate overall program impact. But these kinds of changes are extremely difficult to measure.

Rhodes (1980) identifies three workable models of evaluation which could identify successful development programs. The first, which he terms the output model, is the standard patronage measures approach. The second model he calls the outcomes model. This is very similar to other impact criteria for determining the success of a development program. The third model is designated as the instructional model. It differs from the others in its orientation as a process model. Staff development, when held up to this model, is evaluated in terms of continuing professional education, of how closely it comes to reaching the ideal (proximity evaluation) development program for any given staff member. In this model "learning and subsequent modification of professional performance by participants in staff development activities are viewed as achievements of the participants, not of the program" (p. 203).

Designing Evaluations

The evaluation of faculty development programs is a relative newcomer to the literature of higher education. While little concerted effort has been put forth in program evaluation in the past, the time is right for serious consideration of the topic. The financial and political atmosphere is such that continual disregard for program evaluation may well result in the termination of many valuable programs looked upon as educational "frills" by certain decision makers. Evaluators, program designers, directors, and facilitators responsible for planning an evaluation need to (1) establish the perimeters, (2) designate

the purpose, (3) assess the developmental stage of the program, (4) determine general methods of evaluation, and (5) define the criteria for success. Through the provision of a workable framework for meaningful evaluation the credibility of a development program is enhanced. The time, human resources, and financial expenditures associated with faculty development programs can be successfully defended through the careful planning and application of systematic evaluation designs.

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